

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method of developing a dialogue-enabled application for executing on a computer  
5 that enables a human and a computer to interact, comprising the acts of:
- (a) inputting instructions specifying the flow of a conversation to a  
design tool, said design tool producing a data file, said data file containing  
information concerning prompts, responses, branches and conversation  
flow for implementing a human-computer speech-enabled interaction; and  
10 (b) instantiating an interpreter object within the application, the  
interpreter object interpreting the data file to provide the human-computer  
dialogue-enabled interaction defined by the data file.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said data file further contains information concerning  
a speech recognition engine.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein said data file is automatically stored.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein said inputting of instruction takes place through a  
graphical interface.
5. A system for developing dialogue-enabled software for executing on a computer that  
enables a human and a computer to interact comprising:  
25 a design tool for accepting instructions specifying the flow of a conversation, said  
design tool producing a data file; and  
an interpreter for interpreting said data file, said interpreter automatically enabling  
the human-computer interaction.
6. The system of claim 5 further comprising a library, wherein the library contains said  
30 data files.

7. The system of claim 5, wherein the design tool further comprises a graphical interface.

8. A computer-readable medium comprising computer executable instructions for instructing a computer to perform the acts of:  
accepting instructions, said instructions specifying a flow of conversation between a human and a computer;  
producing a data file for input to an interpreter;  
interpreting said data file; and  
providing the human-computer dialogue-enabled interaction.

9. The computer-readable medium of claim 8 containing further instructions enabling the generated code to be immediately accessible to other software developers.

10. A dialogue flow interpreter (DFI) for use in computer-implemented system for carrying out a dialogue between a human and a computer, wherein the DFI comprises computer executable instructions for reading a data file containing information concerning prompts, responses, branches and conversation flow for implementing a human-computer dialogue, and computer executable code for using said information in combination with a library of shared objects to conduct said dialogue.

11. A DFI as recited in claim 10, wherein the DFI is implemented in an application comprising, in addition to the DFI, a language interpreter, recognition engine, and voice input/output device.